

U.S. Naval Air Station,
Senior Officers' Quarters (Quarters 41)
Pensacola
Escambia County
Florida

HABS No. FL-239

HABS
FLA,
17-PENSA,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. NAVAL AIR STATION,
SENIOR OFFICERS' QUARTERS
(QUARTERS 41)

HABS No. FL-239

Location: U.S. Naval Air Station, on the grounds of Fort Barrancas, Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida.

Present Owner: Commanding Officer; Public Works Center.

Present Use: Residential quarters of the Commanding Officer, Naval Aviation Schools Command.

Significance: The structure is typical of the early Pensacola and Gulf Coast houses of the 19th century. Particularly characteristic is the inset porch of the one-and-a-half story house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Built circa 1870. However, there is some question about the date of construction of the house. A Mr. Croft of Maintenance Control Division, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, says that the sills under the house were hand-hewn and that the structures could have been built as early as the late 1830s or early 1840s. It is known that officer housing was being built on Fort Barrancas about that period, but whether the quarters was among them cannot be ascertained from the records examined thus far.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Quarters 41 was constructed on Fort Barrancas, a U.S. Army post, and it was the property of the Army until 1947, when it was transferred to the U.S. Navy.
4. Alterations and additions: The War Department Quartermaster Corps Form 117 is the only pre-1947 record of changes available on the quarters. Unfortunately, it registers only work accomplished between June 30, 1937 and December 22, 1943. No substantial changes were made to the house during those years, although they cost \$10,538.64 in 1937 and \$13,706.67 in 1938. Installation of new bathtubs, toilets, sinks, cabinets, mirrors, heaters, and other items are indicated on the form. The cost of the 1942 changes was approximately \$187.30. This record, included in the HABS field records, also include a picture of the house and a sketched floor plan.

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The Navy property records for the years since acquisition of the quarters contain floor plans updated in 1956. In that year the house was apparently renovated or at least repainted. The Navy records also reveal the addition of a garage to the property in 1935. It measured 23'-1"x14'-5"x13' with an area of 322 square feet. The only other notation was a reference to the installation of two window type air conditioning units in 1964.

- B. Historical Context: In 1937 Quarters 41 was described as first lieutenant's quarters. After the Navy assumed the property it was designated as senior officers' quarters. The house was reassigned as the quarters for the Commanding Officer, Naval Aviation Schools Command, in 1971, after Quarters 32, the previous residence of that officer, had burned. Captain Richard S. Davidson, USN, was the first of the Schools Command commanders to occupy the house. Captain Raymond E. Loux replaced Captain Davidson on September 1972 and is the current occupant of the house.

Prepared by: Dr. William S. Coker
Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey
Summer 1972

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This structure, completed circa 1870 within the Army's Fort Barrancas compound, is typical of early Pensacola and Gulf Coast houses of the early 19th century. particularly characteristic is the inset porch of the one-and-a-half story house.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure is in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The main structure, a one-and-a-half story frame house, is approximately 60'-2"x72'-3" including the inset screened porch which extends 10'-2" on the south facade and 10'-5" on the west facade. A dining room and lounge 12' x 33' 9" extends off of the north facade and connects to a kitchen and laundry approximately 16' x 29'-6". A bath 8'-2" x 9'-10" exists as an extension on the northeast corner, adjacent to the dining room.
2. Foundations: The frame structure is supported on brick piers 14" square. The rest of the foundation structure is inaccessible.

3. Walls: The exterior exposed walls of the frame structure are covered with white, modern asbestos siding.
4. Structural system, framing: Frame construction.
5. Porches, stoops: The south and west screened porch structure is supported by boxed columns 7 3/4" square, approximately 9'-11" on center. 2/4" board flooring painted Navy grey covers the inaccessible porch joists.

The ceiling of the exposed porch, painted green, reveals the exposed rafters, 1 1/2" x 3 1/2" spaced 24" on center.

A flight of wooden steps 9'-11" wide, with an 11 1/2" tread and a 6" riser exist at the main entrance.

A small porch off the laundry room on the south side of the kitchen, 4'-0" x 5' 2", is covered with a pitched roof 6' 8" x 11'-2" which is supported by wood columns 4" square.

6. Chimneys: A single chimney exists on the main roof. The cap consists of one two-course corbel supported by a single course corbel which contains a modern sheet metal chimney pot.
7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main front entrance to the house consists of double doors, each a six-light over two-panel with panel moldings. On either side of the main entrance doors are two additional two-over-two panel doors, one into the living room and the other into the master bedroom. A single five-panel door at the north end of the west porch provides access to the porch from a northwest bedroom.

The door off the laundry room to the small porch is a two-over-two panel door while the service door from the kitchen to Hatch Road on the north is a four-light over two-panel door with a panel molding.

- b. Windows: Typical windows in the main structure are six-over-six double hung wood sash with 9/2" x 15 1/2" glazing.

The two front windows on the south screened porch are nine-over-nine wood sash with 9/2" x 13 1/4" glazing that extend from the floor.

In the bay window on the east side of the house in the living room, diamond-shaped glazing exists with 3/4" muntins.

Windows in the dining room and kitchen wing are the same as those in the main structure with the exception of a pair of six-over-six windows with 6" x 7" glazing over the kitchen sink.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Roofs over the main structure, the dining room, and the kitchen are all gable roofs, while a flat shallow pitched roof exists over the northeast bathroom extension. All are covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The shallow boxed eaves carry half-round gutters and round downspouts.
- c. Dormers: Two dormers, one from each upstairs bedroom, project from the south roof. Each is also covered with asphalt shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: To the west of the central entry hall, containing a stairway and fireplace, is the master bedroom, which also has a fireplace. Two doors on the north side of this room lead to the northwest bedroom and to a bathroom that also has access to the northwest bedroom.

East of the central entry hall, is the living room containing a bay window with a window seat 18" high beneath the windows. Above the windows are a series of molded panels that extend to the ceiling. A door on the north wall of the living room leads to a study. The study contains a small closet and has a door in the northwest corner leading to the bathroom which is down two risers. Another door from this room leads to a second hallway, also off the main entry hall. Separating the two hallways was a door, now removed, with a one-over-one sidelight over a molded panel on either side of the door. A three-light transom also exists as part of the doorway.

From this second hallway and down two steps is the dining room. North of it is a small lounge room which leads to the kitchen area. West of the kitchen is a laundry room which also contains a small bath and shower.

- b. Second Floor: At the top of the stairs from the main entry hall is a room with a large storage closet. To the

east of this room is a bedroom which also contains a large closet space. On the west is another bedroom, the same size, with a fireplace.

2. Stairways: The plain stairway from the main entry hall rises 16 risers to the second floor. It is 35 3/4" wide with a 10" tread and 8" risers. Two balusters per tread, 3/4" x 1 1/4" support a plain handrail 3" across that begins at a chamfered newel post.
3. Flooring: The first and second floors generally have 2 1/2" wood flooring, highly polished. The two larger bathrooms on the first floor are covered with vinyl tile while the kitchen has linoleum. The laundry flooring is 3"-4" board as is the adjacent small bath.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most of the rooms on the first floor have plastered walls and ceilings of 12" fiberboard squares. Walls and ceiling in the northeast bathroom are vinyl tile, while the large bath on the first floor has plaster walls and a board ceiling. The kitchen has the west wall plastered and the other walls of random width board with the same fiberboard ceiling that exists throughout the rest of the house. Walls in the laundry and the adjacent bath are 3"-4" board, with the laundry ceiling being fiberboard and the bath a narrow board.

On the second floor, the east bedroom has walls of fiberboard and a ceiling of 2 1/2" board. The west bedroom has board and batten walls and ceilings. The walls have 2 1/2" battens, 7" on center in a square pattern while the ceilings have 2 1/2" battens, 9 1/2" on center, also in a square pattern. Wall battens contain 1/4" round molding.

5. Doors and doorways: Most of the interior doors throughout the house are five-panel doors although doors in the master bedroom, living room, and kitchen have two-over-two panel, mortise and tenon doors with porcelain knobs that appear to be original. On the second floor, the door into the east bedroom is a three-panel door while the door into the west bedroom is a 3" board door much like the one into the storage closet.
6. Decorative features and trim: The brick fireplace in the main entry hall has corbeled brick brackets that support a wooden mantelpiece 1 1/4" thick and 11" deep with rounded corners.

An original baseboard is 7" high with a 1 1/2" bead.

A cyma recta molding, varying from 9 1/2" to 17" from the ceiling, is continuous around most of the first floor rooms.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: The house is heated with electric coil heaters in each room and air conditioned with individual room units. Two fireplaces with decorative front metal coverings serve as gas grates.
- b. Lighting: Light fixtures are modern incandescent with fluorescent light in the kitchen.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The house sits on a high sand bluff facing south and overlooking Pensacola Bay across a series of playing fields, used by Navy personnel. Other officers' quarters are located both east and west with Fort Barrancas and Fort San Carlos being less than one quarter of a mile to the west. The rear of the house faces Hatch Road with additional playing fields located across the road.
- 2. Historic landscape design: The house is situated in an area of specimen live oaks and magnolias. Surrounding lawn areas between the houses contain plantings of azaleas, camellias, arborvitae, Florida anise and cedar. Foliage plants and cut flowers also form the foundation plantings.

A concrete walk runs east and west in front of all the quarters along Hatch Road. An entrance walk 4'-8" wide extends up from this main walk to the front porch. A narrow 18" wide brick walk extends from the entrance walk west to the rear of the house.

- 3. Outbuildings: A single car garage with access from Hatch Road exists northeast of the house. It has asbestos siding and a gable roof with asphalt shingles.

Prepared by: John A. Sanderson
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings Survey
July-August 1972

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings and Other Records:

Measured drawings, floor plans and index cards indicating architectural, mechanical, electrical and general work on Quarters 41 in Engineering Department, Public Works Center, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida.

A copy of 1956 drawing of the building is available in the HABS field records.

B. Early Views:

The only early view of the structure is the one contained on the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps form 117. This picture was taken prior to 1937, but no exact date for it has been ascertained. The form together with the picture are on file in the Engineering Department, Public Works Center, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. A copy of this form is available in the HABS field records.

C. Bibliography:

Building Property Records, Plant Account Office, Public Works Center, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under joint sponsorship of the National Park Service, The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Florida, and the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board. Measured and drawn during the summer of 1972 under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS, by: Rodd L. Wheaton, (Architect, HABS), June Project Supervisor; John A. Sanderson (University of Florida), July-August Project Supervisor; Dr. William S. Coker (University of West Florida), Historian; John M. Szubski (Princeton University), Architect; and by Student Assistant Architects: J. Tucker Bishop (University of Texas, Austin); John C. Hecker (University of Illinois, Urbana) and Scott A. Kinzy (University of Nebraska) at the United States Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written descriptive and architectural data in the fall of 1980. Jack Boucher, a HABS staff photographer, took the documentary photographs in March of 1974.